

Gymwomen record highest score ever

By HOLLY HORN
Collegian Sports Writer

Finally. The women's gymnastics team did more than achieve its goal Saturday night of performing well before a home audience. It performed extraordinarily well and marked a 191.95, the highest score in team history.

The Lady Lions (16-3) swept all four events, defeating Rutgers (10-12) and Temple (12-14).

"We've been performing so much under our potential at home this season," Coach Judi Avener said. "They wanted to crack that jinx and prove that they're a good team."

The team's previous high score was a 191.5, set a month ago at Ohio State.

Before Saturday's meet, the Lady Lions were performing inconsistently, scoring better on the road than at home.

With this new high score, the Lady Lions could increase their seeding into the Northeast Regionals and NCAA Championships. After next weekend's Atlantic 10 Championships at George Washington, a team average is determined by averaging the scores of two home meets, two away meets, and any other meet.

Penn State's performance may have had something to do with Saturday's competition being the last meet of the regular season and the last home meet for the seniors.

"I think the seniors did a great job," Avener said. "It's a bittersweet thing: It's sad to see them go but it makes me proud."

The Lady Lions competed first on the vault. Paula Bright and Coby Silver tied for third with a 9.6. Silver also tied her career high. Lynn Crane took second with a 9.65 and Allison Barber took first with a 9.75. Rene Lyst scored a 9.5 and April Polito a 9.3.

Moving to the uneven bars, Penn State achieved a combined score of 47.9, setting a new school record. The previous record was a 47.8, set against New Hampshire last season.

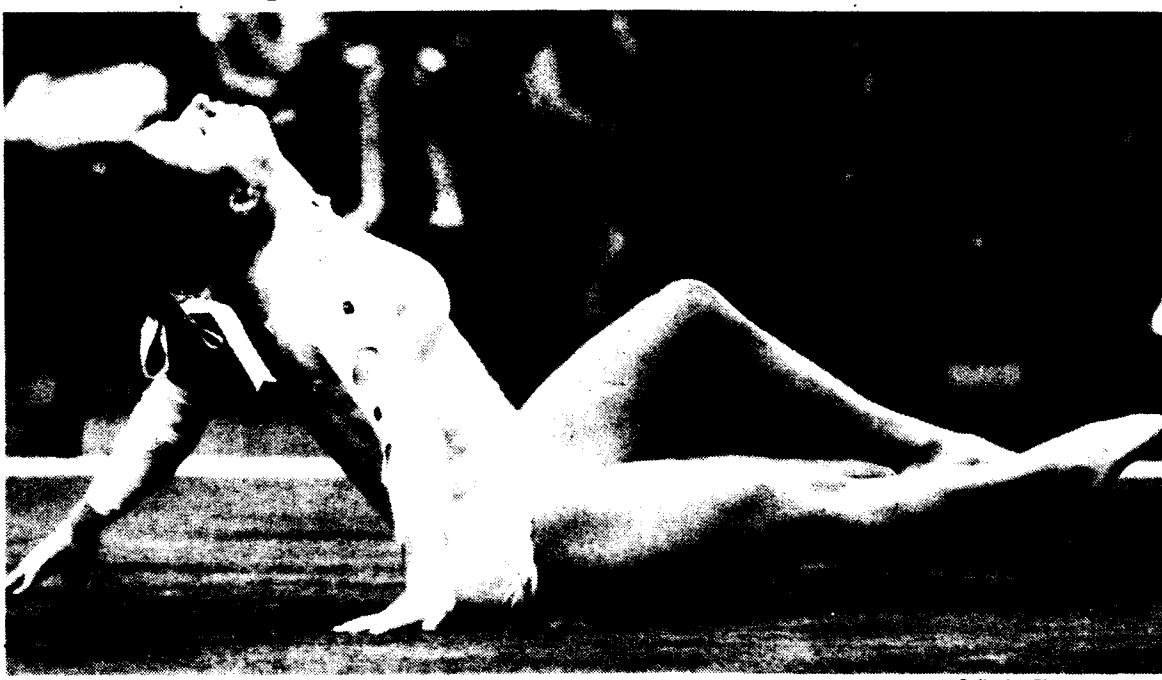
Polito scored a 9.6 on the bars for third place and a new career high. Crane took second with a 9.65 and Kira Rohm took first with a 9.8, achieving her highest score this season and tying the school record.

"We took out the release move that was giving me trouble and we worked on some new tricks to go for a higher score," Rohm said.

Laurie Russo competed on the bars for the first time, scoring a 9.5. Jada Hiltabrand scored a 9.35 and Barber took a 9.1 because she overextended and fell off.

"I really wanted to make my routine but I stopped thinking about my cues," Barber said. "The only words that came to my head were 'I've got to be aggressive.'"

On the balance beam, Lyst took third with a 9.65, Polito scored a 9.7 for



Penn State's Rene Lyst performs her floor exercise routine on Saturday night. Lyst scored a 9.25 as the Lady Lions record their highest team score ever — a 191.25 — to defeat Temple and Rutgers.

second and Barber scored a 9.8 for first, both tying career highs. Marianne Kreisher scored a 9.5, marking a career high, while Crane took a 9.15 and Laurie Russo scored an 8.95 because she fell off.

The Lady Lions showed personality and excitement on the floor exercise.

Hiltabrand took third with a 9.65, tying her career high. Barber took second with a 9.7 and Bright placed first with a 9.75, also tying her career high.

"Every meet I've been scoring higher," Bright said. "I think Judi put me in at the end to try for an even higher score."

Also on the floor, Crane scored a 9.55, Rogers a 9.5 and Lyst a 9.25.

In the all-around, Temple's Sandra Mitchell took third place with a 37.85. Crane took second with a 38.0 and Barber placed first with a 38.35.

Rohm received the Anne Carr award.

Connors defeats Ringlewski

By STEVEN WINE
AP Sports Writer

KEY BISCAYNE, Fla. — Jimmy Connors is back, and Boris Becker is still around — barely.

Connors won for the first time since October 1989 when he beat German Udo Ringlewski in a first-round match yesterday at the International Players Championships.

Becker, facing qualifier Steve DeVries in his opening match, lost the first set, fell behind 5-2 in the third set and trailed 4-1 in a third-set tiebreaker. But he rallied, rallied and rallied to win 5-7, 6-3, 7-6 (7-5).

The 38-year-old Connors, trying to come back from surgery on his left wrist last October, beat Ringlewski 6-4, 6-4 in a match that took nearly 24 hours to play because of rain delays.

It was suspended Saturday night at 3-3 in the first set, and play was halted briefly yesterday at 4-4 in the second set.

Connors' ranking has dropped from No. 14 last year to No. 961. The winner of eight Grand Slam titles was 0-3 in 1990, and he lost to Jaime Yzaga three weeks ago in his only previous match this year.

Connors, who entered the tournament as a wild card, took a 3-0 lead in the second set against Ringlewski, ranked No. 98. Then he lost four consecutive games before rallying for the victory, his first since beating Gilad Bloom in Tel Aviv on Oct. 21, 1989.

The left-handed Connors' wrist was heavily bandaged but gave him no trouble.

Becker, ranked second, was expected to have little trouble against DeVries, a doubles specialist from Cincinnati who had played just three singles matches in tournaments since 1989. But DeVries, ranked No. 270, took advantage of his strong serve and Becker's inconsistency to nearly pull off the upset.

Team salutes seniors at final home performance

By ANDREW C. BIRD
Collegian Sports Writer

As many times as she has been through the bittersweet excitement of seeing her seniors graduate, women's gymnastics coach Judy Avener still cries after the last home meet of their college careers.

"I cry every time, especially when they made as much contribution to the team as they have," said Avener, who has coached the Lady Lions for 17 years.

Paula Bright, Lynn Crane and Kira Rohm competed in the last home meet of their college

careers at Penn State Saturday night in Rec Hall.

Each was given a blanket by the coaches because they completed all four years of their eligibility and they were given bouquets by their parents in a pre-game ceremony.

Before the meet, Crane also received the first Lynn Crane Attitude Award. The award, like others that Avener has created, honors "personal qualities that make an athlete successful," Avener said.

"I've only seen her in a bad mood twice; once when she was hurt and once when she was in a car accident," Avener said.

"No matter what she did, she did it with a smile. Forever more we'll be looking for that kind of person."

Avener said she won't give the award every year. She will only give the award when an athlete exemplifies the same personal qualities Crane has.

After the meet Rohm won the Anne Carr Award, given to the female gymnast with the most inspirational performance of the meet.

Besides the awards, Saturday's final home meet had special meaning for the three Lady Lions.

"It felt great. It's always been my dream to

first compete in Rec Hall and second to make it four years and get the blanket," said Bright, who grew up in the area.

Bright might not have been there, though, because she considered retiring from competition after suffering a knee injury last March. She has been wearing a knee brace for the entire season.

But it hasn't affected her performances. Saturday she won the floor exercise, which she considers her best event, with a 9.75, her personal best.

"Judy sat down with me and made me believe I could get back," Bright said.

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